The Ethnic Origins of the American People, 1790

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THE standard authority on the national origins of white eighteenth-century Americans is a study that was conducted under the auspices of the American Council of Learned Societies and published in the 1931 *Annual Report of the American Historical Association.* The study was principally the work of Howard F. Barker, an expert on family names and indications of descent derived from them, and of Marcus L. Hansen, then the foremost authority on the history of migration to the British colonies in North America. The estimates of the numbers of Americans of Dutch, French, Swedish, and Spanish extraction were based largely on Hansen's historical studies. The estimates of those of British and German extraction were derived by an ingenious extrapolation technique devised by Barker.[1]

Barker's method can be summarized briefly. His first step was to identify a number of names that were distinctively of one national origin or another. For this purpose he relied mainly upon the massive nineteenth-century analyses of British surnames made by William Farr and Henry B. Guppy (each covering England and Wales), James Stark (Scotland), and Robert E. Matheson (Ireland), and upon a variety of sources for German surnames. His second step was to determine, from those sources, the frequency with which bearers of the selected names appeared as proportions of their home populations. Then he counted bearers of those selected names as recorded in the Census of 1790 and, employing the frequency ratios ascertained in the second step, calculated the probable number of Americans of each ethnic group.[2]

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[1] American Council of Learned Societies, "Report of Committee on Linguistic and National Stocks in the Population of the United States," American Historical Association, *Annual Report for the Year 1931*, I (Washington, D.C., 1932), 107-441, hereafter cited as "National Stocks."

[2] *Ibid.*, 141-144, 160-163, and *passim.* Farr's work, published in the *Sixteenth Annual Report of the Registrar-General of Births, Deaths, and Marriages in England and Wales* (London, 1856), is merely a listing of the more common names in England and Wales, tabulated from 20 million names recorded in vital statistics. Gup-

TABLE I
HOWARD F. BARKER'S CLASSIFICATION
OF THE WHITE POPULATION INTO NATIONAL OR LINGUISTIC STOCKS, 1790

State	*English*	*Scotch*	*Irish*		*German*	*Dutch*	*French*	*Swedish*	*Spanish*	*Unassigned*	*Total*
			Ulster	*Free State*							
Me.	60.0	4.5	8.0	3.7	1.3	0.1	1.3			21.1	100
N.H.	61.0	6.2	4.6	2.9	.4	.1	.7			24.1	100
Vt.	76.0	5.1	3.2	1.9	.2	.6	.4			12.6	100
Mass.	82.0	4.4	2.6	1.3	.3	.2	.8			8.4	100
R.I.	71.0	5.8	2.0	.8	.5	.4	.8	0.1		18.6	100
Conn.	67.0	2.2	1.8	1.1	.3	.3	.9			26.4	100
N.Y.	52.0	7.0	5.1	3.0	8.2	17.5	3.8	.5		2.9	100
N.J.	47.0	7.7	6.3	3.2	9.2	16.6	2.4	3.9		3.7	100
Pa.	35.3	8.6	11.0	3.5	33.3	1.8	1.8	.8		3.9	100
Del.	60.0	8.0	6.3	5.4	1.1	4.3	1.6	8.9		4.1	100
Md., D.C.	64.5	7.6	5.8	6.5	11.7	.5	1.2	.5		1.7	100
Va., W.Va.	68.5	10.2	6.2	5.5	6.3	.3	1.5	.6		.9	100
N.C.	66.0	14.8	5.7	5.4	4.7	.3	1.7	.2		1.2	100
S.C.	60.2	15.1	9.4	4.4	5.0	.4	3.9	.2		1.4	100
Ga.	57.4	15.5	11.5	3.8	7.6	.2	2.3	.6		1.1	100
Ky., Tenn.	57.9	10.0	7.0	5.2	14.0	1.3	2.2	.5		1.9	100
U.S.	60.1	8.1	5.9	3.6	8.6	3.1	2.3	0.7	0.8	6.8	100

The technique sounds considerably more complex than it was, and Barker's own description of it made it sound even more complex. It can be put quite simply with a hypothetical example. Suppose bearers of two dozen surnames constituted one-tenth of the population of Scotland; then for every ten persons with those names there were a hundred persons in Scotland. If emigrants from Scotland to America represented a random sampling of surnames, the same ratio would hold in America. The probable accuracy of the technique varies with the size of the sample. With too small a sample of surnames or of Americans, the chances of statistical flukes and consequent distortions of the estimates would be high. Barker guarded against the first danger by choosing his surnames with great care and by eliminating names when the indicated result was, or appeared likely to be, misleading. The second danger was inherently guarded against, for he was dealing with more than three million white Americans and he subdivided his analysis no further than the state level, so that his smallest statistical unit was Delaware, which had a white population of 46,310.

Though the Barker estimates, summarized in Table I, have been accepted unreservedly by American historians, there are a number of reasons for questioning their validity.[3] This is particularly the case in regard to the states from Pennsylvania southward, and more particularly yet in regard to Barker's low estimates of the numbers of people of Celtic extraction in that area. To underrate the Celtic elements in the American population—Highland and Lowland Scots, Welsh, Irish, and Scotch-Irish—is a mistake of no little consequence. It is true that some of the Celtic peoples' distinguishing characteristics, including their language and clan system, all but disappeared during the eighteenth century. It is also true, however, that they remained culturally distinct from the English; in the words of J. G. A. Pocock, the Celts were "no more English than Britain is European." When they went to America they took their cultural baggage with them, as comparison of the accounts of travelers through Celtic Britain with those of

py's work, *Homes of Family Names in Great Britain* (London, 1890), is a systematic study of the names of the yeomanry in every shire of England and Wales. It contains figures on distribution per 10,000 in each shire, a great deal of information about individual names, and an appendix on Scottish names. It is an invaluable source book, even for studying names a century earlier, for Guppy studied only the yeomanry, on the theory that they were largely a "stay at home people." Stark's work, "Nomenclature in Scotland," *Sixth Annual Report of the Registrar-General of Births, Deaths, and Marriages in Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1864), and *Twelfth Annual Report of the Registrar-General* . . . (Edinburgh, 1869), is a compilation of all the names listed in the birth records of Scotland for two years. Matheson's work, *Special Report on Surnames in Ireland* . . . (Dublin, 1909), originally issued as an appendix to the *29th Detailed Annual Report of the Registrar-General* . . . (Dublin, 1894), is similar to Stark's.

[3] Barker's summary table, reproduced here, is in "National Stocks," 124, table 12. Barker added highly speculative figures on the Northwest Territory, "Spanish United States," and "French United States" which we have not included.

American travelers abundantly reveals. They practiced an open-range pastoralism and disdained mere tillage of the soil. They were "indolent to a high degree, unless roused to war, or to any animating amusement." They preferred personal arbitration to law; they had little respect for property rights in land. Politically, they were disputatious and often adroit, but they were inept at governing and nearly impossible to govern. In an orderly English or Anglo-American society, in other words, they were misfits; and when they appeared in sufficient numbers they composed a disruptive element indeed.[4]

That there was a large migration to America after 1715 from the Celtic portions of the British Isles—and especially from the Ulster Plantations of northern Ireland—is indicated both by contemporary accounts and by modern historians. With two exceptions, to be mentioned later, every major group of immigrants during the eighteenth century followed the same pattern of movement: they landed in Philadelphia, went westward to the first unoccupied lands in the interior uplands and valleys, and, as those

[4] The first quotation is from J. G. A. Pocock, "British History: A Plea for a New Subject," *New Zealand Journal of History,* VIII (1974), 7; the second is from Thomas Pennant, *A Tour in Scotland, 1769,* 5th ed. (London, 1790), 214. The generalizations in this paragraph are derived from several years of study of the Celtic peoples and their impact on America, particularly the South, conducted in collaboration with Grady McWhiney and other personnel of the Center for the Study of Southern History and Culture, University of Alabama. Four articles in addition to the present one have appeared as a result of that study so far; several more articles and at least two books are under preparation. The completed pieces are Forrest McDonald and Grady McWhiney, "The Antebellum Southern Herdsman: A Reinterpretation," *Journal of Southern History*, XLI (1975), 147-166, and "The South from Self-Sufficiency to Peonage: An Interpretation," paper presented before the Organization of American Historians, New Orleans, Apr. 14, 1979; Grady McWhiney, "The Revolution in Nineteenth-Century Alabama Agriculture," *Alabama Review,* XXXI (1978), 3-32; and Forrest McDonald, "The Ethnic Factor in Alabama History: A Neglected Dimension," *ibid.,* 256-265.

The bibliography on the Celtic peoples is large. Among the better works are Anne Ross, *Everyday Life of the Pagan Celts* (New York, 1970); T. G. E. Powell, *The Celts* (New York, 1958); Gerhard Herm, *Celts: The People Who Came out of the Darkness* (New York, 1977); Alwyn Rees and Brinley Rees, *Celtic Heritage: Ancient Tradition in Ireland and Wales* (London, 1961); Thomas Crofton Crocker, *Researches in the South of Ireland . . .* (London, 1952); L. M. Cullen, *An Economic History of Ireland since 1660* (New York, 1972); K. H. Connell, *Irish Peasant Society: Four Historical Essays* (New York, 1968); and Pennant, *Tour in Scotland.* See also Henry Jones Ford, *The Scotch-Irish in America* (Princeton, N.J., 1915), 1-208; James G. Leyburn, *The Scotch-Irish: A Social History* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1962), and the bibliography for parts 1 and 2 in that work, 354-361; and Ian Charles Cargill Graham, *Colonists from Scotland: Emigration to North America, 1707-1783* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1956). For a comparison of travel accounts see Kenneth R. Wesson, "Travelers' Accounts of the Southern Character: Antebellum and Early Postbellum Period," *Southern Studies,* XXVIII (1978), 305-318. Wesson has made more extensive comparisons in work as yet unpublished.

lands were taken up, migrated southwestward along the valleys. As early as 1729, James Logan, secretary of Pennsylvania, was complaining that the colony was overrun by unruly Ulster Scots. Two decades later, the western valleys of Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia were teeming with Scotch-Irish, and the newcomers were spilling back eastward into the Virginia southside and the North Carolina piedmont. By the time of the American Revolution, the Scotch-Irish were filling the piedmont region of South Carolina and Georgia. It has been estimated that, all told, about a quarter of a million Scotch-Irish migrated to America during the six decades before the Revolution. In the meantime, large numbers of the Welsh followed the same paths that the Scotch-Irish followed, and from the 1740s onward people began to move at an increasing rate directly from Scotland to America. There were two exceptions to the general pattern of migration: Scottish Lowlanders tended to move to commercial centers large and small from Philadelphia southward, and Highland refugees from the Jacobite uprising of 1745-1746 fled directly to North Carolina and formed settlements in the interior of that colony.[5]

Contemporary accounts and historical studies suggest that eighteenth-century migrants from Wales, Scotland, and Ireland may have amounted to as many as four hundred thousand—which, with natural population increase, would imply possibly twice that number by 1790—and that the overwhelming majority settled in colonies from Pennsylvania southward. The total white population of that area in 1790 was about 1.6 million. Yet Barker estimated that only about a quarter of the inhabitants of the South were of Celtic extraction and that nearly two-thirds were English.[6]

One might be disposed to believe that the impressionistic evidence is misleading: outsiders always seem to be more numerous than they are, if their differences from insiders are especially striking, as those of the Celts were. Moreover, Barker's name-analysis methods seem to belie all impressionistic observations made by contemporaries.

But there are serious flaws in Barker's methodology. This is not to suggest that his basic proposition is unsound; the idea of extrapolating surname ratios from countries sending emigrants to countries receiving immigrants seems entirely reasonable. Barker erred, however, in several crucial respects. His more important errors are of two broad descriptions—historical-cultural and methodological—and both tend to understate the number of Americans of Celtic extraction and exaggerate the

[5] Leyburn, *Scotch-Irish, passim;* Frederick B. Tolles, *James Logan and the Culture of Provincial America* (Boston, 1957), 159-161; Ford, *Scotch-Irish,* 186-208, 215-219; Graham, *Colonists from Scotland, passim;* Wayland F. Dunaway, *The Scotch-Irish of Colonial Pennsylvania* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1944), 107-108; Francis Nash, "The History of Orange County—Part I," *North Carolina Booklet,* X (1910), 63; Harry Roy Merrens, *Colonial North Carolina in the Eighteenth Century: A Study in Historical Geography* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1964), 53-68.

[6] See the sources cited in n. 5 above, and Barker, "National Stocks," 124, table 12.

English. Among the first kind of errors, he made clear that his interest was not in culture but in "blood," or supposed genetic strains in the population. That approach obscures the centuries of wars, conquests, and other forms of interactions that altered the "blood" of both Celtic and Anglo-Saxon peoples but left cultures intact and even hardened them. Consequently, Barker was led into making some strange classifications. For instance, he distinguished between "Celtic Irish" and "Ulster Irish," as if the latter, though most were of Scottish origins, were somehow not Celtic. On the other hand, he treated the Welsh as if they were "Cambrian" English; indeed, of the twenty-two names he selected as distinctively English, no fewer than twelve were instead distinctively Welsh.[7]

Barker's methodological errors are more subtle. He was acutely conscious of the pitfalls inherent in efforts to determine ethnic origins through name analysis, and much of his discussion offers valuable guides to scholars in the field. He considered in great detail, for example, the problems posed by the tendency of immigrants to anglicize their names and of census takers to spell foreign names as if they were English—whereby the German name Mohr became Moore, Schmidt became Smith, Müller became Miller, Schaffer became Shepherd. And yet he refined overmuch, in three important ways.[8]

First, he eliminated such common and distinctively Scottish names as Campbell, on the ground that they also appear in Ireland.[9] Had he known more about the long history of the interaction between northwest Scotland and northeast Ireland he would have recognized the fallacy of that practice; Campbells were Scots, wherever they happened to live. Second, he eliminated some distinctively Scottish names on the ground that families of similar names were found in one English county. Hence Hamilton, for example, was eliminated because the name Hambleton appeared in one shire in England, Stafford, with a frequency of one in a thousand.[10]

Third, he showed no consciousness of the existence of historic frontier regions, particularly that of the English-Scottish borderlands. That barren, nearly treeless area, which for centuries had existed as the separate kingdom of Northumbria, was peopled by herdsmen of both English and Scottish origins, and, as a battleground between the two nations, it had evolved a culture of its own. Its culture more nearly resembled that of the wild Celtic herdsmen to the north than that of the steady farmers to the south; and from the fifteenth century to the nineteenth the flow of people tended to be from Scotland to England rather than vice versa. As a result, by the time Henry Guppy compiled his lists of the surnames of the English yeomanry in 1890, there were in the northernmost English counties—Cumberland, Northumberland, Durham, and Westmoreland—a number of

[7] *Ibid.*, 177, 233, 235. See also the works cited in n. 4, and T. C. Smout, *A History of the Scottish People, 1560-1830* (New York, 1969).

[8] Barker, "National Stocks," 133-163, 271-305.

[9] *Ibid.*, 136, 209, 218-220.

[10] *Ibid.*, 211, 219; Guppy, *Homes of Family Names*, 495.

families bearing distinctively Scottish names and retaining a pastoral Celtic culture. Among the clearly Scottish names that Barker eliminated because some who bore them were found by Guppy in the English north country were Anderson, Bell, Bruce, Craig, Crawford, Davidson, Ferguson, Fleming, Graham, Henderson, Morrison, Murray, Patterson, Rae, Robertson, Stewart, Tait, Thomson, and Wallace.[11]

The result of Barker's overrefining was greatly to increase the probability of statistical skewing. Barker recognized that problem and sought to compensate for it by eliminating distinctive names when they appeared too frequently in America. Thus, for example, in 1790 there were in the United States 216 families bearing the distinctively Scots name Forbes. According to Barker's projection method, that many people named Forbes would indicate 96,000 Scottish families in America, whereas projections from the other seventeen names Barker used indicated a median of 33,500 Scottish families. To overcome the discrepancy, Barker simply eliminated the name Forbes.[12]

This practice, however, compounded rather than remedied the most serious weakness inherent in Barker's excessive care in narrowing down names to ensure distinctiveness. The weakness is that every reduction in the number of names increases the probability of skewing by extrapolation. For example, suppose one has isolated a group of names that constituted 5 percent of the population in the old country. The multiplier is then twenty; that is, for every five persons found bearing those names in America, one estimates that there were a hundred persons of that ethnic stock. If, by contrast, one isolates a group of names that constituted half of the population in the old country, the multiplier is only two. In the former instance, statistically flukish results of the extrapolation process are ten times as likely as in the latter—which far more than compensates for the possibility of error arising from the fact that occasional bearers of the selected names showed up in places other than their native country.

To cite a more specific example, let us consider those leading Scottish names that Barker eliminated on the ground that they were also to be found in Ireland. The names he used to determine Scots constituted 7,859 per 100,000 of the population of Scotland. Had he not eliminated the Scottish names found in Ireland, he would have had another 8,708 per

[11] Regarding the north country, see D. Hay, "England, Scotland and Europe: The Problem of the Frontier," Royal Historical Society, *Transactions,* 5th Ser., XXV (1975), 77-91. For the Scottish names and their distribution in the north country see Guppy, *Homes of Family Names, passim.* Durham, one of the north country shires, may also be considered culturally non-English for an additional reason. It remained a County Palatine (that is, essentially self-governing) into the reign of George III. A good case can be made for considering York and Lancaster in the same category (Lancaster had also been a County Palatine, though its status had been changed before the 18th century), but we have avoided doing so lest the results of our calculations be biased in favor of Celtishness.

[12] Barker, "National Stocks," 218, 226-228.

100,000, or a total of 16,567. His multiplier, in other words, was roughly thirteen, whereas it could have been roughly six. Since both sets of names were Celtic, whether found on one or two sides of the North Channel, Barker's method more than doubled the likelihood of error in estimating the number of Celts in America.[13]

Finally, Barker employed a method that, though not properly described as an "error," was nonetheless misleading. He began with the assumption that most Americans in 1790 were of English origin, and his first and principal concern was to determine what proportion of Americans were in fact English. The misleading quality of that approach can be best illustrated with the example of North Carolina. Contemporary accounts and careful historical studies attest to the presence in colonial North Carolina of large numbers of Scots, Scotch-Irish, and Germans; from such sources one would think that North Carolina was second only to Pennsylvania as the most polyglot of the colonies. Yet Barker's initial calculation, using only English names, indicated that 100.5 percent of North Carolinians were English; when he used both English and Welsh names, and considered them as the same, he calculated that 98 percent of North Carolinians were English. He found it necessary to employ some artful methodological footwork to reconcile his North Carolina estimate with history.[14]

In revising the ethnic analysis of the 1790 census to rectify Barker's errors, it will be useful to follow a suggestion made long ago by J. Franklin Jameson. Jameson, the noted New England historian, bibliophile, and antiquarian, thought the soundest way to proceed might be to try to find out how many non-English there were in the white American population and assume that all others were English. The suggestion is especially valuable in light of a peculiarity of English surnames: the most common of them, such as Smith, Taylor, Brown, Johnson, and Wilson, were not exclusive to England but appeared regularly throughout the British Isles and often, with variant spellings, in Germany as well. Of the forty surnames of greatest usage in England, only six—Green, Cooper, Harrison, Ward, Baker, and Parker—were exclusive to England.[15]

It was for that reason that the list of surnames Barker used was such a skimpy one. He isolated only ten common names as distinctively English—Parker, Baker, Hall, Carter, Green, Lee, Ward, Turner, Cooper, and Robinson—and in fact Hall and Turner were also Scottish names, Turner was common in Ireland and appeared in a variant spelling in Germany, and Robinson had a Scottish variant, Robertson. Together, these ten names constituted about 2.65 percent of the English population, so that the multiplier in projecting names from the 1790 census was about

[13] *Ibid.*, 221-222, 227, tables 21, 23.

[14] For a concise but thorough demographic analysis of North Carolina see Merrens, *Colonial North Carolina,* 53-81. For Barker's initial projections see "National Stocks," 187-188, 194-197. The figure he finally estimated was 66%; *ibid.,* 124, table 12.

[15] Barker, "National Stocks," 130, 175, table 8.

37. If the three names on Barker's list which are actually not distinctively English are eliminated, the remaining seven constituted only about 1.65 percent of the English population, so that the multiplier becomes more than 60.[16]

As will be shown, it is possible to isolate far more (and more commonly used) names indicating Celtic extraction than this. It follows therefore that the probability of obtaining reasonably reliable estimates is much higher if one accepts Jameson's suggestion in adapting and correcting Barker's projection method.

Before proceeding, we may take note of two special circumstances. The first concerns documents. The original manuscript census returns for New Jersey, Delaware, Virginia, and Georgia are missing; some lists for Virginia, compiled from state tax returns, were published as part of the *Heads of Families* series, but none at all are available for New Jersey, Delaware, or Georgia.[17] Barker made estimates for the missing states by extrapolating from estimations for neighboring states; that procedure will not be followed here. The other special circumstance, the matter of Continental European elements in the American population, is considerably different. None of the methodological shortcomings of Barker's handling of the Anglo-Saxon and Celtic portions of the American population applies to persons of Continental descent. Accordingly, for purposes of the present analysis Barker's and Hansen's figures for Americans of German, Dutch, French, and Swedish origins will be accepted without qualification.

Let us now proceed to re-estimate the probable numbers of Americans from the British Isles but of non-English extraction in 1790. We may begin with the Welsh, who, though among the first Celtic peoples to be politically absorbed on a "permanent" basis into the kingdom of England, having lost their independence in the thirteenth century, remained nonetheless culturally distinct. As it happened, most of the truly Celtic names among the Welsh had disappeared by the eighteenth century, and various semi-anglicized versions had replaced them. One simple aspect of the process may be noted briefly. The Welsh term for "son of"—the rough equivalent of "Mac" among the Scots, and of the prefix "O" or the suffix "y" or "ey" among the Irish—was "ap"; hence, for example, Thomas ap Catesby Jones, the hero of the capture of Monterey, California, in 1842. Commonly, however, by the eighteenth century "ap" had been merged into a sur-

[16] *Ibid.*, 175-177, 215-216. The percentages cited here have been calculated from the figures in table 10, *ibid.*, 177.

[17] Bureau of the Census, *Heads of Families at the First Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1790*, 12 vols. (Washington, D.C., 1907-1908). The Virginia lists are supplemented by Mrs. Augusta Bridgland Fothergill, *Virginia Tax Payers, 1782-1787 . . .* (Richmond, 1940). For the sake of uniformity the figures to be given here for Virginia are calculated only on the basis of the Census Bureau's volumes. We have, however, calculated but not included the lists in Mrs. Fothergill's volume; the results do not vary appreciably.

TABLE II
DISTRIBUTION OF WELSH-AMERICANS IN 1790

Name	*Number of Heads of Families*											
	Me.	N.H.	Vt.	Mass.	R.I.	Conn.	N.Y.	Pa.	Md.	Va.*	N.C.	S.C.
Edwards	8	11	3	59	14	53	48	73	31	108	137	48
Evans	1	46	21	35	7	20	33	197	68	71	109	80
James	5	12	2	29	27	15	25	64	40	67	83	39
Jones	87	104	59	287	20	173	210	289	239	345	558	196
Lewis	40	28	44	156	67	165	153	173	52	120	168	55
Morgan	7	17	27	74	2	95	48	77	41	55	115	46
Morris	4	3	6	25	2	36	43	119	49	94	171	56
Phillips	17	17	31	174	56	39	143	111	53	63	143	31
Price	2	3	0	23	7	12	32	61	116	68	111	31
Roberts	37	67	29	43	9	98	57	154	60	83	109	80
Thomas	47	33	27	144	18	82	71	235	147	126	137	75
Williams	36	52	55	303	58	245	209	240	169	231	536	149
Totals	301	393	304	1,352	287	1,033	1,072	1,793	1,065	1,431	2,377	886
	Projection (x 2.5)											
	752	982	760	3,370	717	2,582	2,670	4,482	2,662	3,577	5,942	2,215
	Total Heads of Families											
	16,972	23,982	14,969	65,149	10,854	40,457	54,185	73,322	32,012	37,710	48,021	25,552
	Percent Welsh											
	4.3	3.9	5.0	5.0	6.2	6.2	4.8	5.9	7.1	9.5	11.6	8.8

* Incomplete listing.

name as simply a "p" or a "b"; hence ap Rice became Price, ap Hugh became Pugh, and ap Evan became Bevan.[18]

Other aspects of the evolution of Welsh surnames entail esoteric information that for present purposes is unnecessary. What is relevant is that by the middle of the nineteenth century—and probably by the early part of the eighteenth century—the Welsh in Wales had come to bear strikingly few surnames. Indeed, Guppy found that approximately 40 percent of the people in Wales bore one or another of the following twelve surnames: Edwards, Evans, James, Jones, Lewis, Morgan, Morris, Phillips, Price, Roberts, Thomas, and Williams. Moreover, those names were distinctively Welsh, which is to say that they were borne only by people in Wales or by people of Welsh extraction. At most, in 1790, Americans with those names were two or three generations removed from their Welsh homeland.[19]

In estimating the number of Americans of Welsh extraction in 1790, then, the matter is fairly simple. One merely counts the number of families listed in the census who bore one of the twelve distinctive names, multiplies by 2.5, and arrives at a fair approximation. (Obviously, extrapolation on a multiplier of 2.5 is more likely to be accurate than on a multiplier of 37 or 60.) The results of such a name-count and extrapolation are indicated in Table II. It is to be observed that people of Welsh extraction were distributed throughout America in 1790, but that they formed nearly twice as large a component of the population in the South as in New England.

Dealing with the Scots is somewhat more involved. For our purposes the most useful compendium of Scottish names is the study of birth records made by Dr. James Stark, assistant to the Scottish register, in the early 1860s. From the 109,000 births recorded in Scotland in 1863, Stark tabulated the 150 most common surnames, which accounted for almost half the total. His lists provide excellent raw materials for analyzing the American population in 1790, but they must be used with care. The discrepancy in time is more important in Stark's study than in Guppy's, even though Guppy's analysis was made a quarter-century later, for Stark dealt with the whole population whereas Guppy dealt only with the less mobile yeomanry. The principal distortion that results arises from nineteenth-century migration: large numbers of Irish migrated to Scotland during that time, and especially after the great potato famine of the 1840s. Accordingly, Stark's list of the 150 most common "Scottish" surnames includes three that are distinctively Irish: Murphy (the most common name in Ireland), Kelly, and McGuire. This, as it happens, is a convenience for pres-

[18] Guppy, *Homes of Family Names,* 439.

[19] Barker, "National Stocks," 174 (calculated from Guppy's figures). In making the following tabulations we have depended, for ascertaining variant spellings of surnames, upon Bureau of the Census, *A Century of Population Growth . . . , 1790-1900* (Washington, D.C., 1909), 227-270, Table III, with corrections when the result would otherwise be misleading.

ent purposes, for the total number of Irish births in Scotland in 1863 turns out to have been about 9,000, which rounds out the sample of Scottish names at about 100,000.[20]

Two other complications remain, however. The first is that a number of surnames common in Scotland were also common in England. Eleven of the fifty most common surnames in Scotland—Smith, Brown, Thomson (Thompson in England), Wilson, Clark, Watson, Walker, Taylor, White, Allan (Allen in England), and Martin—were among the fifty most common in England. Bearers of these names constituted 7,795 births in Scotland in 1863, or about 7.8 percent of the total population. The name Thomson can be used if Thompson is not, and so can Watson, since it was a Scottish and north country name;[21] but the others must be eliminated. As indicated, Barker went considerably farther, eliminating names from Stark's lists when even a similar name appeared in a single county of England. To correct Barker's tendency toward overcorrection, we have retained from Stark's lists all distinctively Scottish names which, according to Guppy's study of England, were to be found only in the border counties. A similar practice has been followed in regard to Scottish names also found in Ireland in the nineteenth century. These adjustments accord with what is known of historical migration patterns of Scottish peoples, and have the great advantage of enlarging the sample and thus cutting down the probability of error in extrapolation.

Another necessary adjustment unfortunately reduces the sample. Scots with "Mac" surnames pose a special problem. The Scottish Macs were almost exclusively Highlanders: of the twenty-three Mac names isolated as to place by Guppy (which include all but three Mac names on Stark's lists and other Macs as well), only two, McAdam and McKie (or Mackie), were found in the Lowlands. Large numbers of Highlanders with Mac names participated in the last Jacobite uprising, that of 1745-1746, after which many fled to America. But Scottish Macs would not show up in representative numbers throughout the United States in a census, for two unrelated reasons. The first is that after the Forty-five many of the Highland clans were ruthlessly and systematically broken up, and the use of clan names—mostly Macs—was outlawed. Persons bearing those names would have been reluctant to volunteer them to government officials, even to harmless census-takers in another country. The second reason is that Highlanders who went to what became the United States tended to go to North Carolina. Consequently, one would expect that projections from Macs would give a distorted picture of the proportions of Scots in every American state except North Carolina—an expectation borne out by com-

[20] See Stark in n. 2 above; Stark's findings are summarized in Barker, "National Stocks," 210-213, with the 150 names. Regarding the names Murphy, Kelly, and McGuire, see *ibid.*, 218-219. Barker also eliminates the name Boyle as Irish, but we have retained it on the ground that it was an Ulster name.

[21] For justification for including Watson as Scottish see Guppy, *Homes of Family Names*, 63.

paring such projections with the projections indicated in Table III. To arrive at a valid collection of Scottish names on which to base a projection, it is therefore best to eliminate all Macs.[22]

Eliminations on these and other grounds reduce Stark's list of one hundred fifty surnames to seventy-two. Bearers of those surnames accounted for 25,770 of the 109,000 entries in Stark's lists. When Irish are removed from the entries, the result is that the seventy-two names on our list constitute about 25 percent of the Scottish population. The multiplier, in extrapolating a name count from the 1790 census, is therefore four. The selected Scottish names, the numbers of heads of families bearing those names in each state, the projected total number of Scottish families by states, and the percentages of the white populations by states are shown in Table III.

Some patterns of the geographical distribution of Scots should be noted. Scots constituted a much higher proportion of the population in upper New England than in lower New England. For that region as a whole, they constituted about one-eighth of the population. By contrast, from Pennsylvania southward, Scots constituted more than one-fourth of the population.

Estimates of the Irish component of the American population in 1790 involve still other complications. One concerns the lateness of the tabulations of representative names. Sir Robert Matheson's study of the subject, though masterly, was not done until the 1890s; and because of certain developments in Ireland it seems that any estimate based upon Matheson's names will understate the actual numbers.[23] On the one hand, an enormous emigration from Ireland had taken place in the two centuries before he compiled his lists. On the other, nomenclature in Ireland had not firmly taken its modern form until well into the nineteenth century. Accordingly, many Americans of Irish descent in 1790 would have borne names different from, and more diverse than, those of their distant kinsmen a hundred years later.

Another complication is that it is simply not possible to determine from Matheson's names which Irish in America were from the south of Ireland and which were Ulster Scots or Scotch-Irish. Matheson broke his names down by provinces, but too few were exclusively characteristic of one or

[22] George Pratt Insh, *The Scottish Jacobite Movement: A Study in Economic and Social Forces* (Edinburgh, 1952), 147-164; Alexander Mackenzie, *The History of the Highland Clearances,* 2d ed. (Glasglow, 1914), 170-171, and *passim*. Graham, *Colonists from Scotland,* 188-189. North Carolina calculates out (in rounded numbers) at 13,300 Scots families if Macs are excluded from the reckoning and at 12,500 if Macs are figured in; in view of the number of Macs who might have dodged the census takers, the figures are quite close. Elsewhere, however, the discrepancy was larger; in Pennsylvania, for instance, 19,600 Scots families are found with Macs excluded from the calculations, only 17,300 with Macs included. The Macs—Highlanders—were simply not there.

[23] Matheson's work is cited in n. 2 above.

TABLE III
DISTRIBUTION OF SCOTTISH AMERICANS IN 1790

Name	*Number of Heads of Families*											
	Me.	N.H.	Vt.	Mass.	R.I.	Conn.	N.Y.	Pa.	Md.	Va.	N.C.	S.C.
Aitken	7	10	2	41	1	30	11	10	12	49	33	19
Alexander	14	24	12	26	6	5	10	86	31	33	118	43
Anderson	24	23	10	32	4	25	61	157	68	137	89	96
Bain				2			9	17	14	16	11	3
Bell	1	19	9	28	1	17	64	96	27	176	48	54
Black	20	3	8	25	2	1	13	97	16	26	57	38
Blair	5	14	5	35	1		11	47	8	12	13	19
Boyd	9	14	1	14	3	3	29	102	29	25	41	39
Boyle			2	6		1	2	34	11		10	2
Bruce	1	3	9	44		1	6	8	10	31	18	7
Buchanan			2				13	53	16	6	17	19
Burns	6	13	4	16	3	8	45	69	29	13	38	32
Cameron		1		1		1	17	15	1	9	24	16
Campbell	22	32	21	46	1	20	109	206	33	74	148	71
Christie		7	1	3		2	13	33	2	5	4	1
Craig	9	11	4	8	1	2	12	81	15	19	31	24
Crawford	9	8	12	20	3	34	52	107	30	26	40	36
Cumming	23	38	15	75	3	12	47	41	27	12	28	11
Cunningham	19	3	4	26		8	28	71	17	48	26	25
Currie	1	4		1	6		27	32	11	12	50	13
Davidson	1	18	12	23		21	19	58	20	36	42	13
Dick		3	5	16		9	11	35	12	10	15	11
Dickson	10	1	8	13	5	18	35	83	46	41	93	23
Donaldson		1		1			12	30	5	9	13	5
Douglas	17	5	8	17	12	39	32	54	14	43	30	25
Duncan	2	17	6	8	1	4	18	76	19	16	41	41

Ferguson	7	7	3	16	1	4	71	55	28	55	50	27
Findley		2	2			6	3	53	6	7	13	19
Fleming	1		3	7			12	66	17	21	36	23
Forbes	1	1	5	31		14	10	13	4	2	30	1
Fraser	1	2	5	10	3	7	27	31	25	17	43	29
Gibson	2	21	11	36	4	10	22	73	27	23	64	60
Gordon	25	46	5	11	31	27	28	66	28	32	47	51
Graham		5	12	17		9	60	87	20	18	56	43
Grant	15	14	5	44	8	55	32	16	13	15	25	20
Hamilton	26	5	16	67	6	20	39	113	51	36	45	53
Henderson	9	8	6	12	1	4	21	90	30	50	45	46
Hunter	7	7	9	23	2	4	41	100	18	34	73	32
Hutchison	13	31	17	37	1	21	10	51	11	28	14	26
Irvine	1	2	4	7	1	2	16	147	11	17	60	26
Jamieson	12	9	2	3			6	49	14	22	12	11
Kennedy	14	9	7	19	4	17	34	90	23	21	83	47
Kerr	8	38	15	30	43	5	50	137	34	42	59	33
Lawson			2	5		5	28	9	5	40	17	11
Lindsay	5	5	7	29	4	1	9	34	10	22	31	29
Matheson		1	34	1	75	17	17	22	1		6	2
Morrison	21	50	2	11		5	36	102	14	24	60	12
Munro	1	8	6	63	22	15	28	6	6	9	21	7
Murray	12	13	6	20	3	22	33	54	27	29	40	29
Neilson	9	24	14	54		8	48	55	24	37	56	41
Nicolson				8		6	15	21	20	18	29	10
Paterson	28	20	15	29	2	18	66	148	29	24	115	47
Paton	23	22		18	3	6	13	62	9	9	33	14
Rae	7	8	7	43	8	26	28	60	27	23	73	27
Ramsay	1	11	1		1	1	10	79	7	22	41	17
Rankin	9	2	2	3			5	36	7		9	6
Ritchie	1	3	1	2			4	61	6	11	8	14
Robertson	18	45	9	21		22	77	117	29	94	168	81

TABLE III *(con't.)*
DISTRIBUTION OF SCOTTISH AMERICANS IN 1790

Name	*Number of Heads of Families*											
	Me	N.H.	Vt.	Mass.	R.I.	Conn.	N.Y.	Pa.	Md.	Va.	N.C.	S.C.
Ross	21	12	9	49	17	8	45	110	31	35	66	38
Scott	12	30	30	71	18	69	71	181	69	95	88	71
Shaw	40	44	26	166	16	12	63	87	37	6	61	15
Sim	2	4	1	21	4	2	6	14	40	23	40	38
Sinclair	5	21	4	5			7	20	14	3	9	9
Steel	7	20	9	19	1	46	11	96	24	12	18	27
Stewart	33	36	21	58	1	54	115	242	77	71	125	58
Sutherland			6	1		1	35	8	4	19	22	4
Tait	2		1	4	1		2	20	6	6	13	13
Thomson	8	12	18	77	7	33	30	62	7	25	57	54
Wallace	13	48	17	57	2	12	30	104	30	27	79	34
Watson	17	59	7	43	33	21	30	88	46	50	106	62
Watt	8	9		16	1		22	40	35	27	23	23
Williamson	5		2	4		7	35	53	9	70	64	36
Totals	649	986	544	1,785	377	883	2,107	4,906	1,533	2,155	3,323	2,103
					Projection (×4)							
	2,596	3,944	2,176	7,140	1,508	3,532	8,428	19,624	6,132	8,620	13,292	8,412
					Total Heads of Families							
	16,972	23,982	14,969	65,149	10,854	40,457	54,185	73,322	32,012	37,710	48,021	25,552
					Percent Scottish							
	15.3	16.4	14.5	10.9	13.9	8.7	15.5	26.7	19.1	22.8	27.6	32.9

another; names found all over Ireland must be employed. Barker made some ingenious calculations in an effort to determine the ratios of "Celtic Irish" and "Scotch Irish" in America, and concluded that about three-fifths were of the latter description. In light of the paucity of Catholic churches in eighteenth-century America and the proliferation of Presbyterian churches, especially within a hundred miles or so of Philadelphia, the principal Scotch-Irish port of arrival, it would seem that Barker's figure is extremely conservative; but there is no way of knowing for sure.

In any event, it is possible to compile from Matheson's lists fifty-three distinctively Irish surnames, not found in appreciable numbers in England and not included in our list of Scottish names. These names were borne by 908,400 people out of a total Irish population of 4,717,959. That figures out at 19.2 percent and indicates a multiplier, for extrapolation purposes, of 5.2. The fifty-three Irish names, the number of heads of families bearing them in each state in 1790, and the projected numbers and percentages are shown in Table IV.

It is to be observed that the geographical distribution of Irish and Scotch-Irish resembled that of other Celtic peoples, but in exaggerated form. The percentage of Irish and Scotch-Irish in the New England states ranged from 2.6 in Connecticut to 5.5 in Maine; in the area as a whole, 3.6 percent were of Irish and Scotch-Irish extraction. In the states from Pennsylvania southward, these people constituted nearly 11.2 percent of the white population—more than three times the proportion in New England.

One further observation is in order. Given the large numbers of persons known to have emigrated from Ulster to America in the eighteenth century and the much smaller known migrations directly from the Scottish Lowlands and Highlands, it seems entirely likely that a large portion—possibly the vast majority—of those identified here as Scots, as well as those identified as Irish, made their passage to America by way of Ulster.

It is now possible to add to these revised estimates of Celtic-Americans Barker's and Hansen's estimates of Americans of Continental European extraction, thus arriving at a total of non-English, and to subtract that number from the grand total, thus arriving at a total of English. Table V makes those calculations.

Distinct patterns are immediately visible, and they conform considerably better to what is known of the history of immigration to America than do Barker's estimates. New England, having been peopled mainly by English dissenters in the seventeenth century, came closest to being purely English in 1790; in the region as a whole, 77.6 percent of whites were of English origins, 21 percent Celtic, and 1.4 percent Continental.[24]

[24] It is interesting to note that, of the 2,885 English emigrants to New England whose home counties were traced by Charles E. Banks, only 115 originated in the Celtic fringe—Cumberland, Westmoreland, Durham, Northumberland, Lancashire, Cheshire, Shropshire, Hereford, Monmouth, and Cornwall (*Topographical Dictionary of 2885 English Emigrants to New England, 1620-1650*, 3d ed. [Baltimore, 1963]).

TABLE IV
DISTRIBUTION OF IRISH AMERICANS IN 1790

Name	*Number of Heads of Families*											
	Me.	N.H.	Vt.	Mass.	R.I.	Conn.	N.Y.	Pa.	Md.	Va.	N.C.	S.C.
Barry	7	2	1	7		1	4	8	7	3	6	2
Brennan	1			1			4	18	8	13	6	4
Burke	5	3	13	9	2	5	14	34	26	21	17	11
Brady	1		1				9	27	9	5	27	9
Carroll			6	30	3	7	7	37	47	27	50	22
Callahan	1			3			1	7	2	2	8	6
Casey	1			1	2	4	5	3	9	15	15	9
Connell				1		1	2	7	4	3	6	5
Connelly	1	1		5	1	2	9	25	29	9	15	10
Connor	3	23		16		3	29	45	31	27	30	21
Cullin							3	8	8	1	3	2
Daley	4	2	3	12	1	8	14	27	17	6	14	7
Doherty	2	1		2	1	1	5	59	14	27	40	10
Donnelly			1	2			4	20	5	4	2	3
Donovan		1					4	1	11			2
Doyle	4			3	1	3	2	25	10	3	4	3
Duffy		1					4	11	3	3	6	1
Farrell	2					1	2	6	8			3
Fitzgerald	6	4			1	2	2	18	12	11	5	5
Fitzpatrick							3	8	4	12	6	6
Flannagan							3	10	11	9	4	3
Flynn	2	1		3		2	9	5	4	5	6	6
Foley												
Gallagher								25	1	3	3	2
Hayes	13	51	11	22		50	53	112	37	53	96	31
Healey	19	14	7	20	11	15	1	8	8	18	13	4
Hogan	2	3	1	2			10	6	3	8	16	8
Hughes	4	19	3	26	2	7	14	86	48	85	57	56
Johnston	11	2	1	20	6	1	82	240	22	43	273	83

Kenny	14	17	15	29		46	19	22	2	11	5	2
Kelly	13	43	10	77	15	15	54	115	59	26	75	47
Leary							4	1	3	2	11	
Lynch		1		4			17	23	47	11	28	11
Mahoney	2						1	2	11		3	
McCarthy	3		3	13	1		24	26	8	27	7	14
McGee	2		1	7	1	1	19	30	12	18	53	10
McGraw	3	1				1	6	6	5	3	2	7
McGuire	2				2		8	28	9	8	14	3
McLoughlin	2	10	3				10	57	18	10	16	2
McMahon	3					1	1	12	3	3	5	13
Moran							3	1	15	1	4	1
Mullin		1		1			3	18	6	4	20	6
Murphy	10			8	6	1	24	60	47	34	66	45
Nolan	1	1		6		1	1	6	17	2	18	7
O'Brien	5	1	3	7		3	14	5	11	3	11	10
O'Neill	1	1		1			4	9	14	10	34	13
Power	12	34	30	46	6	15	25	25	15	28	35	17
Quinn	2			2				12	4	8	9	5
Reagan							1	8	5	9	22	9
Ryan	6	3	1	6		5	12	35	23	10	10	6
Shea	2	1	2	1			8	12	1			
Sweeney		1		2			3	19	10	19	6	4
Sullivan	8	4	1	3		1	10	16	25	29	42	23
Totals	180	247	117	388	62	203	575	1,432	768	692	1,224	575
					Projection (×5.2)							
	936	1,294	608	2,018	322	1,056	2,990	7,446	3,994	3,538	6,365	2,990
					Total Heads of Families							
	16,972	23,982	14,969	65,149	10,854	40,457	54,185	73,322	32,012	37,710	48,021	25,552
					Percent Irish							
	5.5	5.4	4.1	3.1	3.0	2.6	5.5	10.2	12.5	9.4	13.3	11.7

TABLE V
PERCENTAGE OF ETHNIC DISTRIBUTION
OF THE POPULATION, 1790

Ethnic Group	*Me.*	*N.H.*	*Vt.*	*Mass.*	*R.I.*	*Conn.*	*N.Y.*	*Pa.*	*Md.*	*Va.*	*N.C.*	*S.C.*
Welsh	4.3	3.9	5.0	5.0	6.2	6.2	4.8	5.9	7.1	9.5	11.6	8.8
Scots	15.3	16.4	14.5	10.9	13.9	8.7	15.5	26.7	19.1	22.8	27.6	32.9
Irish	5.5	5.4	4.1	3.1	3.0	2.6	5.5	10.2	12.5	9.4	13.3	11.7
Subtotal Celtic	25.1	25.7	23.6	19.0	23.1	17.5	25.8	42.8	38.7	41.7	52.5	53.4
German	1.3	.4	.2	.3	.5	.3	8.2	33.3	11.7	6.3	4.7	5.0
Dutch	.1	.1	.6	.2	.4	.3	17.5	1.8	.5	.3	.3	.4
French	1.3	.7	.4	.8	.8	.9	3.8	1.8	1.2	1.5	1.7	3.9
Swedish					.1		.5	.8	.5	.6	.2	.6
						Total Non-English						
	27.8	26.9	24.8	20.3	24.9	19.0	55.8	80.5	52.6	50.4	59.4	63.3
						English						
	72.2	73.1	75.2	79.7	75.1	81.0	44.2	19.5	47.4	49.6	40.6	36.7

The Middle States were polyglot. New York, originally a Dutch colony and the recipient in the eighteenth century of some portion of the great Celtic and German migrations, was less than half English, though the English formed the largest single component in the population. In Pennsylvania, founded late in the seventeenth century and the leading entrepôt for immigrants during the eighteenth, the English constituted less than a fifth of the population. Celts constituted more than two-fifths, and Germans made up a third.

In the South, the makeup of the population reflected seventeenth-century origins and eighteenth-century patterns of immigration: the German element declined as one moved farther from Philadelphia; in the upper South, the English slightly outnumbered Celts, and neither formed a majority; in the Carolinas, Celts formed a majority and substantially outnumbered the English.

One further observation about the geographical pattern is of consequence. Ethnicity was not only polarized on a north-south axis but tended to be polarized on an east-west, or more properly a tidewater-backcountry, axis as well. In the Beaufort and Charleston census districts of South Carolina, for instance, fewer than 40 percent of the inhabitants were Celtic, whereas in the Camden district the Celtic portion was nearly 60 percent. In North Carolina the polarization was more pronounced. Celts in tidewater districts ranged from 39.4 percent in Edenton to 47.8 percent in Newbern; Celts in the interior constituted 63 percent of the population in the Fayette district and almost 100 percent in the Hillsborough district. In the (West) Virginia counties of Fayette and Lincoln, Scots and Irish alone (probably most of both being Scotch-Irish) numbered nearly 80 percent of the population. In Kentucky, almost half the people were of Celtic origins, 32 percent were of English, and 18 percent were of Continental. In western Pennsylvania's Washington County, center of the Whiskey Rebellion of 1794, more than three-quarters of the people were of Celtic extraction.[25] In light of this distribution, and of what is known about patterns of migration during the westward movement after 1790, it appears entirely likely that the north-south ethnic polarization continued as settlers pushed into the interior.

These revised data should, of course, be used with caution if they are employed in making generalizations about social, political, or economic conditions and events in the eighteenth century. It seems reasonable, however, to suggest that much of the political activity of the period—particularly east-west political polarizations within states and north-south polarizations in the nation as a whole—may have reflected ethnic differences rather than ideology or economic circumstances.

[25] These figures have been reached by the methods indicated above. The source for the two Virginia counties is Fothergill, *Virginia Tax Payers;* that for Kentucky is Charles Brunk Heinemann, *"First Census" of Kentucky, 1790* (Washington, D.C., 1940), which covers about 70% of Kentucky's population.